

Fox Theatre plans changes to boost year-round appeal in Midtown

Preservationist-approved enclosure bound for Marquee Club terrace added in 2018

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Eagle-eyed preservationists of Atlanta went on high alert this month when a notice of historic design review was submitted to Atlanta's Urban Design Commission containing the words "Fox Theatre Landmark Building" and "an addition."

Turns out the planned changes are more of an enhancement, or design tweak, that won't impact historical integrity at the iconic 1920s Midtown venue, per Fox Theatre officials.

The theater project set for city review on Oct. 8 involves a planned enclosure of the Marquee Club's upper Arcade Terrace, a facet of the Fox added in 2018 as part of extensive renovation campaign.

The "modest enhancement" aims to create more conditioned, indoor space for Fox Theatre guests, whereas the current terrace is open to the elements, including heat and cold, officials tell Urbanize Atlanta.

Plans call for an enclosure design that "will carry forward the same architectural style, detailing, and materials used in the 2018 addition to ensure the enhancement blends seamlessly with the existing structure," project leaders wrote via email.

No changes to the Fox's historic façade are planned. Plans do call for two small mechanical units to be installed on the terrace's roof to condition the enclosed space. "These will be discreetly placed and painted," wrote officials, "to minimize visibility from the street and surrounding areas."

No renderings or visuals are currently available but could be soon, according to a Fox Theatre rep.

David Mitchell, Atlanta Preservation Center executive director, said his organization is aware of the theater plans and has no qualms.

"If this was not the 'Fabulous Fox,' we would not be discussing this," Mitchell said. "I also understand that Karen Gravel (Lord Aeck Sargent architecture firm's director of historic preservation) will be making the presentation. The APC is not only confident she will explain it clearly but also ensure that it's done with the most thoughtful direction possible."

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